

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 IO-12

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 622

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 7059

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: SITREP FOR APRIL 23, 1973

FOLLOWING RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL CAN THO BEING REPEATED

QUOTE

CAN THO 0224

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, MOPS, PINT, CA, CB, HU, ID, PL, VS

SUBJECT: SITREP FOR APRIL 23, 1973

1. SUMMARY: MILITARY ACTIVITY CONTINUED HEAVY, PARTICULARLY IN THE HONG NGU AREA. THE CASUALTY RATIO SLIPPED AGAINST THE GVN SLIGHTLY. VI THANH ICCS UNDER HUNGARIAN CHAIRMANSHIP REFUSED A GROUP OF CITIZENS' REQUEST TO INVESTIGATE A VC/ NVA CEASEFIRE VIOLATION. THE VC/ NVA ARE PREPARING A MAJOR REORGANIZATION OF FORCES IN THE KIEN PHONG- CAMBODIAN BORDER AREA. THE GVN IS TRYING TO RE- ESTABLISH A FUNCTIONING LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN EASTERN BAC LIEU FOLLOWING A VC MINI- OFFENSIVE. END SUMMARY.

2. SECURITY SITUATION: MILITARY ACTIVITY REMAINED FAIRLY HEAVY OVER THE APRIL 21-22 WEEKEND, DECREASING ONLY SLIGHTLY ON SUNDAY, APRIL 22. THE FIGHTING WAS HEAVIEST IN THE HONG NGU
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AREA, FOLLOWED BY CHUONG THIEN. THERE WERE FOUR TERRORIST INCIDENTS EACH DAY, WITH MOST OF THEM, AS USUAL, IN KIEN HOA. THE CASUALTY RATIO SLIPPED AGAIN IN FAVOR OF THE VC ON APRIL 22 WHEN THEY LOST ONLY 21 KIA COMPARED TO THE GVN'S 18 KIA AND 89 WIA. GVN REPORTED VC CASUALTIES HAD BEEN ABOUT 50 KIA TO SOME 25 KIA FOR THE GVN FOR THE PRECEDING SEVERAL DAYS. THE INTENSITY OF FIGHTING THE WEEK OF APRIL 15-21 IS SHOWN BY A SLIGHT INCREASE IN ARTILLERY ROUNDS EXPENDED AND THE NUMBER OF AIR STRIKES APPROVED. TOTAL CASUALTIES: GVN 120 KIA AND 911 WIA VERSUS VC/ NVA 482 KIA FOR THE WEEK, ABOUT THE SAME AS THE PREVIOUS WEEK: GVN 130 KIA AND 826 WIA VERSUS VC/ NVA 412 KPA.

3. ICCS: A CITIZEN DELEGATION FROM LONG MY DISTRICT, CHUONG THIEN PROVINCE, CALLED ON THE ICCS TEAM IN VI THANH APRIL 20 TO PROTEST CONTINUING VC MORTAR ATTACKS ON THE DISTRICT TOWN. THE GROUP REQUESTED THE ICCS TO CONTACT THE VC AND INVITE THEM TO SURVEY THE DAMAGE THEY HAD WROUGHT. THE HUNGARIAN DELEGATE, CHAIRMAN OF THE TEAM THAT WEEK, DID NOT RESPOND TO THE CITIZENS' APPEAL. A CANADIAN TEAM MEMBER REMARKED THAT THE POLES AND HUNGARIANS ARE BECOMING UNEASY ABOUT THE CONSTANT HARASSMENT OF LONG MY BECAUSE THEY ARE RUNNING CBVHLMGBYMCQFATIONS# WHICH DO NOT IMPLICATE THE VC. MORE THAN 500 ROUNDS OF MORTAR HATPMJMJNOYF# DOWN ON LONG MY SINCE THE CEASEFIRE.

4. COMMUNIST ACTIVITY. (A) THE VC/ NVA APPEAR TO BE PREPARING A MAJOR REORGANIZATION OF THEIR FORCES IN THE UPPER DELTA WITH THE ESTIMATED INTENTION OF CONCENTRATING A TWO DIVISION FORCE ALONG THE KIEN PHONG- CAMBODIAN BORDER. TWO MAIN FORCE REGIMENTS, THE E-1 AND E-3, OF THE 5 TH DIVISION ARE MOVING BACK TOWARDS

THE CAI CAI AREA OF HONG NGU DISTRICT OF KIEN PHONG PROVINCE LOTAHSAWD, THYH DIVISIONAL SDLVDIMDYDYQEPZ# THE E-2,

WHICH REMAINED IN THE AREA WHEN THE REST OF THE 5 TH DIVISION INVADDED DINH TUONG IN 1972. WSTLMB THO 0215). KIEN PHONG SECTOR NOW REPORTS THAT THE 271 ST REGIMENT OF THE VC/ NVA 9 TH DIVISION IS ALSO MOVING TOWARDS CAI CAI FROM AROUND THE TONG LE CHAN AREA IN GWZ MR 3. MR IV G-2 HAS NOT CONFIRMED THIS DEVELOPMENT. CONFIDENTIAL

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ANOTHER REGIMENT OF THE NVA 9 TH DIVISION, THE 272 ND, HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN THE HONG NGU BATTLES FOR SOME TIME. A VC/ NVA COMBINATION SUCH AS THIS COULD TAKE ON THE 9 TH ARVN DIVISION WITH SOME CHANCE OF REAL, THOUGH PROBABLY SHORT- LIVED, SUCCESS. THE KIEN PHONG SECTOR S-2'S ESTIMATE THAT THE HONG NGU BATTLES ARE LIKELY TO BECOME MUCH MORE SERIOUS SEEMS CORRECT. IF THERE

IS TO BE A MAJOR RENEWAL OF VC/ NVA OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS IN MR IV, HONG NGU WILL BE A PRIORITY ONE TARGET.

(B). THE VC/ NVA HAVE RESURRECTED A SIMPLE TACTIC OF INDIRECT ATTACK TO CAPTURE GVN OUTPOSTS. THE TACTIC INVOLVES SURROUNDING SOME ISOLATED OUTPOST ON THREE SIDES, CUTTING OFF REINFORCEMENTS AND SUPPLIES, AND JUST WAITING FOR THE LONELY TERRITORIAL FORCES TO LEAVE BY THE OPEN SIDE. THIS TACTIC AVOIDS THOSE UNFORTUNATE RARE OCCASIONS WHEN SECOND RATE GVN FORCES ARE COMPLETELY SURROUNDED AND FORCED TO EVERYONE' S SURPRISE TO FIGHT VERY WELL. THE TACTIC HAS BEEN USED SUCCESSFULLY RECENTLY IN KIEN PHONG, CHUONG THIEN, AND DINH TUONG PROVINCES. COMBINED WITH RF/ PF MORALE PROBLEMS (CAN THO 0216) AND RESTRICTIONS ON GVN USE OF ARTILLERY, THIS TACTIC POSES A SIGNIFICANT THREAT TO ISOLATED GVN POSITIONS.

5. GVN ACTIVITIES: (A). MGEN TRAN BA DI, COMMANDER OF THE ARVN 9 TH DIVISION, TOLD THE CHAU DOC VICE CONSUL APRIL 22 HE WOULD BE NAMED DEPUTY MR IV COMMANDER IN THE NEXT SEVEKL WEEKS. DI HAD RECOMMENDED THAT HIS PRESENT DEPUTY DIVISION COMMANDER, COL. VINH, TAKE OVER THE 9 TH BUT HAD RECEIVED NO CONFIRMATION FROM MR IV.

(B). BAC LIEU PROVINCE IS ATTEMPTING TO RE- ESTABLISH POSITIONS IN NORTHERN VINH CHAU DISTRICT AFTER THE VC MINI- OFFENSIVE OF THE PAST FEW WEEKS. ON APRIL 17 A DELEGATION OF PROVINCE OFFICIALS VISITED KHANH HOA VILLAGE, THE SCENE OF MOST OF THE FIGHTING. THE VILLAGE CHIEF BEGAN THE MEETING BY APOLOGIZING FOR THE ABSENCE OF SEVERAL VILLAGE AND HAMLET OFFICIALS. HE EXPLAINED THAT DURING THE PAST FEW MONTHS MANY OFFICIALS WERE AVOIDING THEIR ASSIGNED POSTS FOR FEAR OF THE VC. THE VILLAGE POLICE CHIEF, CONCURRENTLY THE DEPUTY VILLAGE CHIEF FOR SECURITY, SPENT MOST OF HIS TIME IN THE PROVINCE CAPTIAL. THERE IS ALSO A PF SHORTAGE BECAUSE SOME 70 PF DESERTERS ARE HIDING IN VILLAGE PAGODAS. SCHOOLS AND HEALTH STATIONS ARE SHUT AND THE GVN IS NOT COLLECTING TAXES. MR IV' S CREATION OF A SPECIAL TACTICAL AREA (CAN THO 0140) IS DESIGNED TO ESTABLISH SECURITY AND GET THE CONFIDENTIAL

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GOVERNMENT MOVING AGAIN. BARNES UNQUOTE
BUNKER

NOTE BY OC/ T: SAIGON 7059. # PARA 3 AND 4 AS RECEIVED.
CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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